

**SECTION 7 -  
RFPS AND RFQS FOR  
THE DESIGN  
PROFESSIONAL**



Iowa Sustainable Design Initiative



**SECTION 7 - RFPS AND RFQS FOR  
THE DESIGN PROFESSIONAL**

# Sustainable RFQs and RFPs for the Design Professional

## Introduction

Writing a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) or Request For Proposals (RFP) for design professionals' sustainable design services is a relatively new concept. Identifying all of the desired requirements of the proposed project correctly can be perceived as a complex process. Care needs to be taken to include all details related to sustainable design, such as special considerations, rating systems, qualifications, and required services for the project. Writing the RFQ and/or RFP will set the stage for the owner to hire a qualified design professional who can successfully design the project as the owner intends.

Often an advertisement will be published for public projects. These advertisements give an abbreviated version of the RFQ/RFP. It is important to include the key elements of the RFQ/RFP in the advertisement, as well as how the entire RFQ/RFP may be obtained.

There are many good resources for creating an RFQ/RFP with sustainable design requirements. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has developed an extensive "how-to" for writing a sustainable RFP titled "WRITING THE GREEN RFP: Sustainable Design Language for Consultant Requests." This document includes the necessary language for quantifying the type of sustainable project being requested. The "how-to" guide has been reprinted in Appendix C by permission of the AIA Committee on the Environment (COTE). As noted on the COTE Internet site, this is a tool for clients—educational and cultural institutions, companies, agencies, non-profit organizations, and others—who are writing requests for proposals or qualifications from architects and other design professionals, as well as development, construction, and construction management services. This document touches on the basic elements of an RFP for design services for a sustainable project, as well as some of the issues to be considered. Some of the language cited is fairly ambitious, and clients should take care to thoroughly understand the cost and schedule implications of such requirements, should they include those in their project requests.

Fundamental elements of the RFQ/RFP that are addressed in the document include:

- project introduction;
- project objective;
- qualifications and experience;
- services required and approach;
- scope of the project;
- budget;

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- submissions requirements;
- evaluation methodology; and
- contractual information.

## Sample Requests

It can be relatively simple to write sustainable design requirements into an RFP. For example, the **Iowa Laboratories Facility**, an Iowa Department of Administrative Services' project, included the following requirements for sustainable design.

*"The design for facilities on the State of Iowa Capitol Complex shall be developed through cooperation and coordination with the Capitol Complex Master Plan. The Master Plan is currently in the final preparation stage of the approved document. Of particular interest for the design and construction of all facilities at any location is the concept of sustainable architecture and commissioning. Sustainable architecture will be coordinated with Architect/Engineer and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Commissioning, which will be the responsibility of the Construction Manager, will be coordinated with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the separately selected Architect/ Engineer."*

Many sample requests are available on the COTE Internet site. They include:

### Educational

- RFP, RFQ, and Pre-qualification: Poudre School District Prototype Elementary School, Fort Collins, CO (2000)
- Request for LEED Consultant: Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ (2001)
- RFP: New Laboratory Complex, Department of Global Energy, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Stanford, CA (2001)
- RFP: SALA Building, Penn State University, University Park, PA (2000)
- RFP: Environmental Studies Center, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH (1995)
- Prequalification: Kasson-Mantorville High School Competition, Kasson, MN (2002)

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## **Cultural/Civic/Municipal**

- Specific Requirements Request: Brooklyn Children's Museum, New York Department of Design and Construction, New York, NY (2000)
- RFQ: City of Highland City Shop and Public Works, Highland, UT (2000)
- RFP: Environmental Education Center, Township of Upper St. Clair, PA (2000)
- RFQ: David L. Lawrence Convention Center Expansion, Public Auditorium Authority of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Convention Center Design Commission, Pittsburgh, PA (1998)
- RFP: Dan Ryan Woods Nature Preserve, City of Chicago Department of Environment, Chicago, IL (2002)
- RFQ: Green Building Assistance, Alameda County Waste Management Authority, San Leandro, CA (2002)
- RFQ: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, CA (2001)

## **Residential**

- RFP: Site 18A, Battery Park City Authority Residential Development and Design, New York, NY (2000)
- RFP: City of Portland Green Investment Fund, Grants for Affordable Housing, Portland, OR (2002)

## **Federal**

- Sustainable Design Language for RFPs, Department of the Navy (multiple projects) (2000)

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### Related Resources

Contacts	Description	Contact Information
<b>Minnesota Sustainable Design Guide</b>	Introduction to the RFP Process – Describes issues to be considered before drafting an RFP with sustainable criteria.	Website: <a href="http://www.msdg.umn.edu/2.0RFP-Labs/MSDG/intro.html">www.msdg.umn.edu/2.0RFP-Labs/MSDG/intro.html</a>
<b>New Ecology Institute, Green RFPs: A HowTo Guide</b>	Tips on writing a green RFP	Web site: <a href="http://www.newecology.org/docs/newsletter/Green%20RFP%20II.PDF">www.newecology.org/docs/newsletter/Green RFP II.PDF</a> (Cannot open)
<b>State of California</b>	Multiple sample construction documents, including sample advertisements, RFP and RFQ language, and RFP scoring sheets.	Website: <a href="http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/GreenBuilding/Toolkit.htm">http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Green Building/Toolkit.htm</a>
<b>State of New Jersey</b>	Sample RFQ for High Performance/Green Architects, Engineers, Consultants	Website:
<b>Writing the Green RFP</b>	The American Institute of Architects Committee on the Environment's document that provides sustainable design language for consultant requests.	Website: <a href="http://www.aia.org/cote/rfps/">http://www.aia.org/cote/rfps/</a>

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